

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6050

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10698

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PROP, PFOR, SOPN, UR,

SUBJECT: SOVIET PAPER CONTINUES ATTACK AGAINST US CORRESPONDENTS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 10082 (B) MOSCOW 9950 (C) MOSCOW 9923

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, PRE-DICTABLY REACTING TO THE COURT COMPLAINT FILED BY NEWS-WEEK CORRESPONDENT FRIENDLY REPORTED REFTEL A, LASHED OUT AGAIN IN ITS JULY 7 ISSUE BY ESCALATING THE ATTACK AGAINST FRIENDLY AND REPEATING THE ACCUSATIONS MADE EARLIER (REFTELS B AND C) REGARDING WREN OF THE NEW YORK TIMES, KRIMSKY OF AP, AND ESPECIALLY FRIENDLY.

2. ARTICLE WAS UNSIGNED AND ENTITLED "INVOLUNTARY SPY -- HA-HA*" BESIDES BASIC REHASH OF MATERIAL CONTAINED IN MAY 26 AND JUNE 23 ARTICLES, IT RIDICULED FRIENDLY'S POSITION THAT HIS CONDUCT WAS "COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE" AND POOH-POOHED HIS ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN A STATEMENT FROM THE CIA AS BEING AKIN TO A GANGSTER GETTING A REFERENCE FROM THE MAFIA OR A PROSTITUTE FROM A A MADAME. EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE BEING SENT SEPTEL.

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3. LITGAZ THREW THE GAUNTLET DOWN TO FRIENDLY SAY-
ING IT WELCOMED COURT TEST HE INITIATED
AND HAD EVIDENCE WHICH WOULD "LAY THE GROUNDWORK NOT
ONLY FOR THE PUBLIC CONDEMNATION OF THIS GENTLEMAN BUT
ALSO FOR THE CRIMINAL PUNISHMENT PROVIDED FOR BY SOVIET
LAWS." END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS,
FRIENDLY SAID THAT LITGAZ REPRESENTATIVE FAILED TO SHOW
UP FOR COURT HEARING JULY 2. JUDGE SAID FRIENDLY COM-
PLAINT SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO COVER BOTH MAY 26 AND JUNE
23 ARTICLES, NOT JUST FIRST. OTHERWISE, CASE WOULD
BE "WEAKENED", AND JUDGE MIGHT BE FORCED TO SUSPEND PRO-
CEEDINGS.

5. IN SUBSEQUENT EXCHANGE INITIATED BY JULY 4 FRIENDLY
LETTER TO COURT, FRIENDLY TOLD JUDGE HIS COMPLAINT HAD
ALREADY BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COURT, THAT IT WAS SUFF-
ICIENT UNTO ITSELF, COULD NOT NOW, BY SOVIET LAW, BE
REFUSED EXCEPT FOR REASONS OF SUBSTANCE OR FORM, AND
THAT SUSPENSION OF THE PROCEEDINGS WOULD CLEARLY BE
OUTRIGHT REFUSAL TO ALLOW HIM TO CLEAR HIS NAME.

6. AFTER RECONSIDERATION, JUDGE RESCHEDULED
HEARINGS FOR JULY 13, PROSISING THAT LITGAZ REPS WOULD
APPEAR.

DATE FOR FORMAL TRIAL MAY BE SET AT THAT TIME.

7. IN NEW DEVELOPMENT, FRIENDLY PLANNING DEPART MOSCOW
JULY 8 1700 HOURS FOR VIENNA VIA AUSTRIAN AIRLINES
FLIGHT YPW. HE WILL BE STAYING AT HILTON HOTEL AND
CONFERRING WITH NEWSWEEK REPRESENTATIVES, WHETHER
DIRECTLY IN VIENNA OR BY PHONE. FRIENDLY'S IMPRESSION
IS THAT HIS NEWSWEEK SUPERIORS, DESPITE EARLIER GO-AHEAD,
MAY WISH TO TAKE WAIT-AND-SEE POSITION AND NOT
PUSH CASE FURTHER.

8. COMMENT: IF NEWSWEEK RELUCTANCE MENTIONED PARA 7
MATERIALIZES AND FRIENDLY DOES NOT APPEAR TO CONTEST
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COURT CASE, LITGAZ WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY TAKE THAT AS
TANTAMOUNT TO ADMISSION OF GUILT AND MIGHT GRIND OUT
A "LAST LAUGH" ARTICLE.
STOESSEL

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